

or framing, were also important Stick/Queen Anne style features.

²⁴ The William J. Follett House, built in 1899 and located at **34 Eldredge Street** is an elaborate example of the Shingle style. The main elements of this style are illustrated by the field-stone foundation carried up to the veranda, the steeply sloping gambrel roof and the shingled exterior. The asymmetrical massing with rounded and polygonal projections is also representative of the style.

²⁵ The Unitarian congregation in Newton Corner, organized in the 1850s as the Channing Religious Society, was named after William Ellery Channing, a leader of the Unitarian movement. The Society moved to Farlow Park in 1881. George F. Meacham, a Newton Corner resident and member of the Unitarian congregation, designed its new church at **75 Vernon Street** that same year. It became the Newton Presbyterian Church in 1946.

The corner entrance tower and stone steeple form the focus of Meacham's Gothic Revival style design. The pointed arch, a hallmark of the Gothic Revival style, is used here, as well as polychrome detailing favored by the High Victorian Gothic style. Brownstone from Indian Orchard, Massachusetts forms the basic wall material, with contrasting bands of Ohio sandstone and patterned yellow slate in the roof.

²⁶ The 1880 William W. Jacques House at **29-31 Elmwood Street** is one of only sixteen buildings in Newton designated as a Newton Landmark Preservation Site. Where many of the houses in the Farlow and Kenrick Parks Historic District reflect fully elaborated architectural styles, the Jacques House exemplifies vernacular building practices of the late nineteenth century. The asymmetrical massing is reminiscent of the Queen Anne

style, and the dentil work of the porch and projecting bays hints at the Colonial Revival style. Overall, however, the house is relatively unadorned, and has served as both a single-family and multi-family residence in the past. As such, it represents much of Newton Corner's Vernacular development.

²⁷ Known as "Rosedale," this 1845 Greek Revival/Italianate style residence at **124 Vernon Street** was long associated with the Chaffin family. John C. Chaffin was a founder and benefactor of the Newton Free Library and his house now serves as the Newton Corner Branch Library. It was common for houses built in Newton Corner during the mid-1800s to mix styles. In this example, ornate Italianate style brackets appear with wide corner pilasters and a veranda supported by Ionic columns representative of the Greek Revival style.

²⁸ The **Newton Free Library** once stood across the street from Rosedale. Demolished in 1992, an assisted living facility now stands in its place. Despite the loss of the library, the facility provides a commendable example of new construction being compatible with existing buildings. Certain design elements of the historic **Evans Hotel** at the corner have been incorporated with the adjoining assisted living center, avoiding visual disruptions such as uneven cornices and disproportionate additions.

Text taken from *Discover Historic Newton Corner*. Revised and updated by Newton Planning and Development Department in conjunction with the Newton Historical Commission. December 2005.

David B. Cohen, Mayor



Discover Historic NEWTON CORNER

Newton Corner has passed through several stages of development on its way to becoming the populous village it is today. Newton's first village was originally settled in the 1630s as a farming settlement of Cambridge. (It was not until 1688 that Newton was officially incorporated as a separate town.)

Throughout the 17th century, the village was known by various names such as Cambridge Village and Bacon's Corner after Daniel Bacon, a local tailor. The area continued to be little more than an outpost of scattered farms, however, until traffic along what is now Washington Street increased between Boston and its western hinterland. A cluster of small homes and shops eventually developed along Washington Street to serve the produce-laden farm wagons and travelers headed to the city, and its location along this route to Boston helped to cement Newton Corner's identity as the City's first village. The increase in traffic also brought a new name to the area: Angier's Corner, taken from its popular tavernkeeper, Oakes Angier.

Although it was transportation rather than industry which played a key role in the development of Newton Corner, a surprising number of fledgling factories appeared amidst the residential streets during the 1800s. The railroad arrived in 1834, and with it came the village's current name, Newton Corner. Named the Meteor, the new train made the inaugural Boston-Newton trip travelling at a speed of six miles per hour. Despite the slow pace, the Meteor nonetheless

made history, introducing an era of suburban growth that continued through the 20th century.

With the railroad's daily service, the village became readily accessible, creating opportunities for Newton Corner landowners and Boston businessmen. By the 1840s, a few prosperous Bostonians had built homes on Newton Corner's hillsides. It is said that many of these new residents held on to their Boston townhouses and kept a summer place in Newton, where the country air was considered healthier than that of the city.



Farlow Park

In the era of new prosperity that arrived in the wake of the daily commuter trains, the local population of tradesmen and shopkeepers also grew. This population began to spread southward to Church Street and Richardson Street, along Centre Street, and to the area directly north of the early central business district on Washington Street near the Boston & Worcester train station.

The real land boom, however, occurred after the Civil War. Mount Ida Street and Park Street were opened for development during this era and new homes gradually spread across the southern and eastern sections of the village. The founding and construction of the Newton Free Library in 1865 marked the increased importance of the area to the south of the railroad tracks. Within the next 20 years, most of the village's churches erected new buildings near the library along Centre Street and Farlow Park. Eliot Congregational Church had predated this southward migration by several

years, and the present church (1957) at the corner of Centre Street and Church Street is their fourth building on this site.

Newton Corner became increasingly attractive to Boston's white-collar work force in the 1880s. Rental housing and numerous single-family homes were built during this period as increasing numbers of bookkeepers, clerks, insurance salesmen, and small shop owners caught the suburban dream. Pressure for land became so great in the late 19th century that large estates as well as former farmlands were broken up for house lots. Initially, these house lots were generous enough to accommodate substantial homes in the Queen Anne and Italianate styles popular in this period. After 1910, though, the trend in residential development turned increasingly to smaller homes on smaller lots, and the pace of development gradually slowed as available land became more scarce.

The Massachusetts Turnpike Extension brought a major change to the area's appearance in the early 1960s. Constructed along the right of way for the Boston and Albany railroad, the Turnpike Extension cut a trench through the center of the village, essentially dividing it in two and requiring the demolition of most of Newton Corner's central business district and many residences in the process. The Gateway Center high-rise was eventually built over the roadway.

This walking tour of Newton Corner courses through the Farlow and Kenrick Parks National Register Historic District. Roughly bounded on either end by Farlow and Kenrick Parks, the area consists of tree-shaded streets with a high concentration of architecturally significant residences reflecting a bygone era. The mid- and late-1800s suburban housing of Newton Corner was commodious and well built, and life behind the lace and velvet curtains of the area's ornate wood-frame residences progressed at a slow and comfortable pace. The buildings on this tour range in style from the Greek



Centre Street

Revival of the 1840s through the Colonial Revival of the early 1900s, but all have in common the turn-of-the-century preference for intricate, fanciful wood ornament. Except for the Newton Corner Branch Library, none of the sites on the tour are open to the public.

¹ The tour begins at **276 Church Street**. The ca. 1911 West Suburban YMCA was one of the first buildings in the country to be constructed specifically for use as a YMCA. Although the building is institutional in nature, it exhibits several features of the Colonial Revival style. The decorative quoining on the corners and the Doric columns supporting the entablature were popular motifs of the style. Note how the new addition of the YMCA references the earlier construction in terms of materials and scale, but does not attempt to mimic the style.

² The Dexter Whipple House at **234 Church Street** possesses several characteristics of the Greek Revival style. The broad corner pilasters extend to the second story, supporting a wide frieze just below the eaves. The pediment on the gable end facing the street and the fluted columns supporting the porch are also components of the style.

³ The Orrin Whipple House at **195 Church Street** and the Andrew B. Cobb House at **188 Church Street** provide an interesting basis for comparison of house styles. Constructed in 1845 and 1850 respectively, their similarities in form are apparent, as

both have their gable ends set to the street. 195 Church Street is an example of the Greek Revival style, possessing stylistic similarity to 234 Church Street. 188 Church Street, on the other hand, expresses elements of the Italianate style. Rather than a full pediment on the gable end, the eaves have slight returns with ornate paired brackets. The dentil course in the gable and the scroll saw work on the porch brackets are also features of Italianate style decoration. Lastly, the first floor windows are the same height as the second story, whereas those at 195 Church Street are floor-to-ceiling windows on the first floor, another trademark of the Greek Revival style.

Two notable examples of the Greek Revival style not included on the tour are located on Centre Street. Despite substantial alteration, the wide façade, floor-to-ceiling windows, Doric corner pilasters and front pediment of **465 Centre Street** remain typical of the style. **540 Centre Street** is a unique example of the Greek Revival style. Known as the Hollis Hotel, it illustrates a three-part design expressed in cubic forms. While specific period defining elements have been stripped as a result of alterations, the overall style remains readily identifiable. For example, the veranda that once encircled the house is gone, but evidence of its existence is visible.

⁴ Henry Hobson Richardson built the Immanuel Baptist Church at **187 Church Street** in 1885. Richardson was America's foremost architect of the 1870s and 1880s, and is perhaps best known for Trinity Church in Boston's Back Bay. Immanuel Church is a late work by Richardson, who died in 1886, just one year after its completion.

Despite missing windows in the tower's arches, the defining features of Richardson's style are present. The powerful geometric forms and rock-faced, random ashlar characterize the Richardsonian

Romanesque style. Both the massing and detail of this brownstone church are expressed in bold, simple designs. Laid out in a Greek cross plan, the building has short wings and a massive central tower with a pyramidal roof. Large stone blocks extending from the cornice of the front wing, stubby colonettes, and rounded arches comprise the building's major ornament. Today the building serves as the Hellenic Gospel Church.

Shifts in demographics and church attendance commonly result in the need for churches to reinvent themselves. In the case of Richardson's church, another denomination filled the vacancy created as earlier occupants departed, and the building has continued to be utilized as a religious institution. Often, however, alternative uses must be envisioned. The Newton Corner Methodist Congregation is located just off the tour path at **515 Centre Street**, and exemplifies the adaptive use of buildings as the needs of a community change over time. The famous architectural firm of Cram, Wentworth & Goodhue built the church in 1897, replacing a wooden structure outgrown by its congregation. Its Byzantine design features a massive ribbed dome crowned with a small, round temple. The cream-colored brick walls and ornate white terracotta trim framing the curved door and window openings provide a distinct contrast to the dark, polychrome stonework of Newton Corner's High Victorian churches. The building was converted into condominiums by 2001, and alterations can be seen in the sheet metal cladding on the upper corners of the top two floors, the use of the cellar as a garage, and the redesign of the entrances. Despite the changing function of the building, much of the exterior has been well preserved.

⁵ Laid out between 1883-1885, **Farlow Park** has long served as a popular place for Newton Corner residents to relax, play, and take their Sunday stroll. Surrounded by three churches and the Underwood Elementary School, the park

John S. Farlow, a Newton Corner resident, donated the park to the city. A millionaire with holdings in railroads and a participant in the China and India trade, Farlow lived in a large mansion on Waverly Avenue. Farlow Park is the focal point of the National Register Historic District created in 1982.

Francis E. and Freelan O. Stanley
of the famous Stanley Steamer
motor car company erected this

Across the street at **105 Eldredge Street** is a house with similar proportions to 104 Eldredge Street but which expresses an entirely different style. The same projecting center bay is present, but in this example the paired window of the second story is capped with a double pointed arch. The steeply pitched gabled

10 The well-preserved Elizabeth C. Rogers House at **322 Franklin Street** represents a combination of the Queen Anne and Stick styles common to Newton Corner. The complex roofline of the 1885 building features a hipped main roof with a small crowning gable, dormers and secondary projecting roofs. Its elaborate wood trim, including

23 The clipped-gable roof, with its slanted triangular front, was a popular Stick style motif. Across from Farlow Park sits the 1883 Joseph Hill house at **42 Eldredge Street**. The clipped-gable profile appears over the porch entrance and in the main roof. Elaborate scroll-sawn ornament, as well as surface boarding that reflects the building's interi-